DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 438 763 HE 032 765

AUTHOR Sweitzer, Nancy Guadalupe
TITLE "Fiddle-Dee-Dee, I'll Think About It Tomorrow": Overcoming Academic Procrastination in Higher Education.
PUB DATE 1999-00-00
NOTE 72p.; M.A. Thesis, Biola University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Masters Theses (042) -- Tests/Questionnaires (160)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS College Faculty; College Students; Higher Education; Learning Motivation; Learning Strategies; Student Characteristics; *Student Motivation; *Study Habits; *Study Skills; *Teacher Influence; Teacher Role; Teacher Student Relationship; Thinking Skills
IDENTIFIERS *Procrastination

ABSTRACT

This dissertation reviews procrastination, and academic procrastination in particular, focusing on research which analyzes methods that both college students and professors can employ to effectively combat academic procrastination. The first section of the paper examines various forms and sources of procrastination, childhood conditions contributing to procrastination, and academic procrastination. Six styles of academic procrastination are described: the Perfectionist, who does not want anything less than perfect; the Dreamer, those who want life to be easy and pleasant; the Worrier, who fears risk; the Defier, who rebels against rules; the Crisis-maker, who looks for an adrenaline rush by doing a task at the last minute; and the Overdoer, who agrees to undertake too much but cannot make choices and establish priorities. In the second section of the paper student perspectives are examined; five full-time college students were interviewed and given a self-assessment quiz that measures procrastination styles students identify with. Suggestions for overcoming academic procrastination are also offered. A third section of the study focuses on educators' perspectives. One college professor is interviewed on the perceived effectiveness of methods used to help students keep on track, and various teacher-implemented motivation methods are evaluated. Appended are student and professor interview questions and transcripts. (Contains 23 references.) (RH)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

HE

ED 438 763

"FIDDLE-DEE-DEE, I'LL THINK ABOUT IT TOMORROW": OVERCOMING ACADEMIC PROCRASTINATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Education

Biola University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Education

By

Nancy Guadalupe Sweitzer

Fall 1999

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

N. SWEITZER

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

HE 032 705

Copyright © 1999 by Nancy Guadalupe Sweitzer

"FIDDLE-DEE-DEE, I'LL THINK ABOUT IT TOMORROW": OVERCOMING ACADEMIC PROCRASTINATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

M. A. Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Education

Biola University,

La Mirada, California

USA

By

Nancy Guadalupe Sweitzer

Fall 1999

Approved by:

Department Chair: _____ Date: 11/30/99

Capstone Chair: June Ketzel, Ph.D. Date: 11/29/99

Second Reader: _____ Date: 11/30/99

ABSTRACT

"FIDDLE-DEE-DEE, I'LL THINK ABOUT IT TOMORROW":
OVERCOMING ACADEMIC PROCRASTINATION
IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Nancy Guadalupe Sweitzer

This paper is divided into three chapters:

A. Chapter I focuses on reviewing the literature regarding procrastination in general, and academic procrastination in particular. Special emphasis is placed on the six styles of procrastination: the Perfectionist, the Dreamer, the Worrier, the Defier, the Crisis-maker, and the Overdoer (Sapadin, 1996, 12).

B. Chapter II focuses on academic procrastination from the students' perspective. Five full-time college students are interviewed about their attitudes regarding academic procrastination and the use of teacher implemented methods of motivation. Sapadin's procrastination quiz is discussed and the students previously mentioned take the quiz to measure which procrastination styles they identify with. Suggestions for students on overcoming academic procrastination is offered as well.

C. Chapter III focuses on academic procrastination from the educators' perspective. One college professor is interviewed on the perceived effectiveness of any methods they may use to help keep their

students on task. Implications for pedagogical practice are discussed and recommendations for further research are made.

Table of Contents

CHAPTER I:

I. Introduction. 1

III. Review of the Literature. 1

A. Various Forms of Procrastination. 1

1. Academic

2. Decisional

3. Neurotic

4. Compulsive

5. Life routine

B. Sources of Procrastination. 3

1. Task avoidance

2. Fear of failure

3. Perfectionism

C. Childhood Conditions that Contribute to Procrastination. 5

1. Being intellectually under-challenged

2. Not being held to high standards of responsibility

3. Receiving insufficient instruction and support for completing tasks in school

D. Academic Procrastination. 7

1. College procrastination v. high school procrastination

2. Self-handicapping

3. Perfectionism and gifted students

IV. The Six Styles of Academic Procrastination. 21

A. The Perfectionist. 23

B. The Dreamer. 23

C. The Worrier. 24

D. The Defier. 24

E. The Crisis-maker. 25

F. The Overdoer. 25

CHAPTER II:

V. Procrastination Quiz. 28

A. Student #1. 28

B. Student #2. 28

C. Student #3. 29

D. Student #4. 29

E. Student #5. 30

F. Discussion of Results. 30

VI. Summary and Discussion of Student Interviews. 31

VII. Suggestions for Students on Overcoming Academic Procrastination. . .33

A. The "On Your Mark" Stage: From Denial to Awareness. 34

B. The "Get Set" Stage: From Awareness to Commitment. 35

1. Ambivalence

2. Regret

C. The "Go!" Stage: From Commitment to Making It Happen. 37

1. Thinking positively

2. Speaking positively

3. Acting positively

D. Motivating Oneself to Stay on Track. 38

CHAPTER III:

VIII. Summary and Discussion of Professor's Interview. 39

VIV. Evaluating Teacher Implemented Methods of Motivation. 41

A. Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation. 42

B. The Use of Tests to Enhance Incentive Motivation. 43

C. "No Deadlines" Procrastination Policy. 44

D. Coping with Perfectionist Students. 46

X. Conclusions and Implications for Pedagogical Practice. 49

XI. Recommendations for Further Research. 50

XII. References. 51

XIII. Appendix. 54

A. Student Interview Questions. 54

B. Students' Interview Transcripts. 55

1. Student #1. 55

2. Student #2. 56

3. Student #3. 57

4. Student #4. 58

5. Student #5. 58

C. Professor Interview Questions. 60

D. Professor's Interview Transcript. 62

CHAPTER I

"Fiddle-Dee-Dee, I'll Think About it Tomorrow": Overcoming Academic Procrastination in Higher Education

Procrastination typically involves delaying the start of a task until one experiences distress about not having performed the activity earlier. Solomon and Rothblum (1984) defined procrastination as "the act of needlessly delaying tasks to the point of experiencing subjective discomfort," and it is considered to be chronic or dysfunctional when such behavior disrupts normal everyday functioning. Procrastination is especially common in the academic domain. Ellis and Knaus (1977) estimate that 95% of American college students procrastinate.

Despite the fact that academic procrastination has negative consequences, and that most students are aware of these consequences, procrastination continues. The majority of research in the field of academic procrastination has focused on the causes and effects of procrastination. However, it is also the intention of this writer to shed light upon subsequent research, which analyzes methods that both students and educators can employ to effectively combat academic procrastination at the college level.

Research on Various Forms of Procrastination

Many of the tasks and enterprises that individuals undertake are done voluntarily, that is, under their own self-control or self-regulation. Tuckman (1996) has labeled acts which require that one exercise influence over one's own behavior, such as studying, dieting, or cleaning up after oneself, as self-regulated performance. These are important areas of performance,

particularly in school, and it is thought that people possess "self-directive capabilities that enable them to exercise some control over their thoughts, feelings, and actions by the consequences that they produce for themselves" (Bandura, 1986). However, people who are skeptical of their ability to exercise control over their behavior tend to undermine their own efforts to deal effectively with situations that tax or challenge their capabilities (Bandura, 1986). The lack or absence of self-regulated performance has been labeled procrastination.

Procrastination is the act of putting off doing something until a future date, postponing or delaying needlessly. Procrastination can be manifested in various forms, based on the degree to which the behavior is functional or dysfunctional for the person experiencing it (Ferrari, 1994). Following are the more common forms of procrastination: (1) *academic* procrastination, defined as passing in term papers or preparing for examinations at the last minute; (2) *decisiona*l procrastination, defined as the inability to make timely decisions; (3) *neurotic* procrastination, defined as the tendency to postpone major life decisions; (4) *compulsive* procrastination, defined as decisional and behavioral procrastination in the same person; and (5) *life routine* procrastination, defined as experienced difficulty in scheduling when to do recurring chores and routines and in doing these routines on schedule (Ellis & Knaus, 1977).

A survey by this writer of empirical studies on procrastination failed to locate a single study that compared and correlated two or more kinds of

procrastination enumerated above. Until such research is undertaken, it remains unclear whether these phenomena are unrelated.

In addition, some individuals avoid aversive tasks that may bring long-term gain by indulging in short-term distractions (Lay,1992). Over time, this behavior is likely to preclude achieving success or satisfaction in personal, health, work, or creative domains (Ferrari, 1994). Other more productive individuals will complete many moderately pressing, yet aversive tasks in order to avoid completing others of even greater personal significance or aversiveness (Ellis & Knaus, 1977). And still others will postpone completion of a task to avoid premature response or impulsiveness (Ferrari & Emmons, 1995). This third category of behavior can be viewed as a form of incubation.

Chronic procrastination overshadows all aspects of life and causes an overwhelming discomfort that impinges on ability to work (McCown & Johnson, 1991). Compared to those who do not procrastinate, procrastinators seek perfection and fear failure, are more pessimistic (Lay, 1992), and experience higher levels of anxiety, especially when they realize they are procrastinating (McCown, & Johnson, 1991). Regardless of which form procrastination takes, it is abundantly clear that all forms of procrastination are assumed to elicit some degree of emotional upset (Milgram, 1991).

Research on Sources of Procrastination

Even though procrastination may disrupt daily functioning and cause personal stress, many people still delay the inevitable. Thus, the search for personal and environmental factors contributing to procrastinatory behavior has been the focus of recent research. Procrastinatory behavior may occur for

several reasons. Some procrastinate for the "rush" of trying to accomplish the given assignment (Ferrari, 1992), others may procrastinate because they enjoy doing things impulsively rather than planned (McCown & Johnson, 1991; Ferrari, 1992), some do so to avoid the task or situation at hand (Ferrari, 1992), and others may procrastinate due to fear of failure.

The latter two reasons—task avoidance and fear of failure—are the primary excuses for procrastination, especially in academics, although of the two, fear of failure is the prominent reason given by procrastinators (Solomon & Rothblum, 1984). Task avoidance is when a person intentionally avoids an aversive task (Ferrari, 1991, 1992; Solomon & Rothblum, 1984), and this is particularly likely if the task involves a heavy cognitive demand and is subject to evaluation (Ferrari, 1991, 1992). Fear of failure, on the other hand, is delaying for fear that performance will be substandard and not reach the expectations set by others (Rothblum, 1986; Solomon & Rothblum, 1984). In academics, particularly, fear of how others will evaluate performance may be overwhelming.

Aside from the reasons previously mentioned, clinical literature attributes procrastination behavior to a number of variables including perfectionism, fear of failure and fear of success (Adderholdt-Elliott, 1991; Burka & Yuen, 1983; Ellis & Knaus, 1977; Sapadin, 1996). In Subotnik's study (1997), some subjects were asked to reflect on their earliest memories of delaying responsibilities. They were also asked to hypothesize about the source of this behavior. The following responses were representative of the group as a whole:

I could always get things done at the last minute for a school deadline. With research, there's no fixed deadline, and because I love to do it, I don't procrastinate.

The reason I would procrastinate in school and still do in my life at work, is because I would get stuck at a point in a problem when I didn't know what to do next, or else I simply didn't want to do a given task.

In high school I used to do the unpleasant things first, so then I could do the fun things. By the time I got to college, I realized there was no way I could manage everything and still have fun. Some things just had to get put off.

I learned during childhood that I could wait until the last minute to complete school assignments and still pull if off. Seeing how close I could get to a deadline became my challenge. I figured out at a young age that if I put off something I don't want to do long enough, it would get done without me.

These revelations were rational outgrowths of three childhood conditions (VanTassel-Baska, 1989): (1) being intellectually under-challenged, (2) not being held to high standards of responsibility, or (3) receiving insufficient instruction and support for completing tasks in school. As the study subjects reached higher levels of education they encountered

increasing demands and greater amounts of assigned responsibility. Soon choices had to be made in terms of time commitments. The procrastination response that evolved in elementary and high school had become an ingrained habit for some:

> Even after I examine my procrastination, or see how quickly things go once you start, it doesn't prevent me from procrastinating again.

This habit can be overcome, only with great effort:

> I have learned from a psychiatry resident in med school that one of the ways to learn to be a good doctor is to "embrace the terror." That means being able to tackle the tasks that you find most difficult or most fearful first. I no longer see any value in procrastination. It's always best to do something when it is effective.

> I hate the idea of being behind because it's like a constant onslaught. The floodgates are always open. The only way you have a chance of keeping your head above water is by bailing fast. If you put things off, things get more complex and you can get that lost feeling of "Where do I begin?" I have a hard time relaxing if thing need to be done. I want, more than anything, to experience peace and quiet.

However, according to the study, most subjects have embraced their procrastination and made it work for them. Although some suffer from emotional wear and tear, they remain, for the most part, highly productive.

> Often when I am procrastinating I really have something on the back burner and I need the time to work it through. I can get things done quickly and at a high level once it gets to a certain stage. I do seem to work better and with a clearer head under pressure.

Most people have some implicit theory about why they procrastinate. Burka & Yuen (1982) noted that those who have serious problems with procrastination generally tend to attribute their difficulties to personality flaws, such as being lazy, undisciplined, or not knowing how to organize their time. On the basis of their counseling experiences with procrastinators, Burka and Yuen dismissed such self-blaming explanations and asserted, instead, that "procrastination is not just a bad habit but a way of expressing internal conflict and protecting a vulnerable sense of self-esteem."

It has also been proposed that procrastination results from a combination of (a) disbelieving in one's own capabilities to perform a task (Bandura, 1986); (b) being unable to postpone gratification; and (c) assigning blame for one's own "predicament" to external sources (Ellis and Knaus, 1977; Tuckman, 1996).

Research Focusing on Academic Procrastination

Procrastination is especially common in the academic domain. In Solomon and Rothblum's (1984) survey, 50% of students reported that they

procrastinated on academic tasks at least half the time, and an additional 38% reported procrastinating occasionally. Faculty estimates of student procrastination were even higher. Procrastination was more common for term papers than for studying for exams or doing weekly assignments.

Student procrastination is nothing new. For some, the tradition of procrastinating on papers and projects is so pervasive that it is almost a source of pride. ("You're not starting that paper yet, are you?" "No way, it's not due until tomorrow afternoon.") However, when student work is delayed until the last minute, and especially when most of those last minutes occur at the very end of the semester, the likelihood of optimal learning is seriously hindered.

Several questionnaires have been developed for the purpose of categorizing college students into procrastinators or non-procrastinators (Lay, 1986; Solomon & Rothblum, 1984). These instruments are made up of Likert scale-type items followed by open-ended questions. The open-ended questions ask participants how they might respond to typical academic situations that are known to evoke procrastination behavior. Another technique involves monitoring the proportion of study participants who mail back a given document within a time frame imposed by an experimenter (Muszynski & Akamatsu, 1991). Although these scales and techniques have provided a basis for the literature on procrastination, the focus of study instruments has remained, predominantly, on the academic domain.

Rothblum, Solomon, and Murakami (1986) defined academic procrastination as the "tendency to (a) always or nearly always put off

academic tasks, and (b) always or nearly always experience problematic anxiety-associated with this procrastination." They suggested that academic procrastination can be assessed with straightforward self-report questionnaires. Such self-reports appear to be reliable and have been shown in two separate studies to be significantly and positively associated with actual behavioral procrastination, as assessed by the tardiness with which students handed in papers or assignments (Rothblum, 1986, Solomon & Rothblum, 1984). However using tardiness as an assessment of behavioral procrastination is not a highly reliable method of measurement, due to the fact that many procrastinators are often able to meet deadlines on time.

Self-reported procrastination has also been shown to be significantly negatively related to school performance (Solomon & Rothblum, 1984). Furthermore, trait procrastinators also exhibit a greater likelihood of being behind schedule on their personal projects (Lay, 1990), studying for an examination for fewer hours than intended (Lay & Burns, 1991), and turning in their completed questionnaires later that others (Ferrari, 1992). Self-reported frequent academic procrastination is also associated with missing deadlines for submitting assignments, delaying the taking of self-paced quizzes, claiming test anxiety, and obtaining low course and semester grades (Beswick, Rothblum, & Mann, 1988; Lay & Burns, 1991; Rothblum, 1986). Academic procrastination has also been related to a number of personality variables. It is significantly and positively associated with irrational beliefs, social anxiety, perfectionism, depression, self-handicapping, low self-efficacy, and low self-esteem (Solomon & Rothblum, 1984).

Empirical research focusing on academic procrastination supports the notion that procrastination is a motivational problem that involves more than poor time management skills or trait laziness. Solomon and Rothblum (1984) showed that, though students endorsed many different reasons for procrastinating, the majority of reasons were related to fear of failure (e.g., performance anxiety, perfectionism, and lack of self-confidence). In line with this finding, research on academic procrastination has consistently found that students who procrastinate a great deal score significantly higher than other students on trait anxiety and depression, and significantly lower on self-esteem (Solomon & Rothblum, 1984). Anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem can be conceptualized as personality factors associated with fear of failure.

The personal and practical problems that result from dysfunctional procrastination are particularly striking in academic settings, as the tendency to put off academic tasks results in problematic levels of anxiety (Solomon & Rothblum, 1984). In essence, procrastinators have a problem setting goals for themselves, and subsequently perceive that they have less control of time throughout the day (Lay, 1993). These problems manifest themselves in a number of disruptive behaviors, as academic procrastinators study fewer hours than they intend to study for exams (McCown & Johnson, 1991; Lay & Burns, 1991), intend to start later (and actually start later) than they should on class assignments (Lay & Burns, 1991), and delay in returning materials to professors (Ferrari, 1992). Not surprisingly, students

who procrastinate tend to be dissatisfied with their courses, and have lower grade point averages than non-procrastinators (McCown & Johnson, 1991).

According to one study (Gallagher, 1992), overcoming procrastination and problems with public speaking anxiety were the most prevalent personal concerns of students at the University of Pittsburgh, with 52% and 45% of students reporting high or moderate need for help with these problems. These two items were ranked highest by the total sample, and several subgroups (men, women, Blacks, Whites) suggesting two rather pervasive student problems. In the same study, respondents also indicated a high to moderate need for assistance in areas such as: "increasing self-confidence" (37%), "increasing motivation" (33%), "eliminating self-defeating behaviors" (32%), "becoming more assertive" (32%), and "fear of failure" (31%).

Overcoming procrastination is a concern with which a majority of the respondents from the University of Pittsburgh would like help. However, the survey did not attempt to measure the repercussions of the concern. It is probable that some students postpone activities more than they should but not enough to get into serious difficulty. Others undoubtedly have serious procrastination problems that lead to academic difficulties and significant problems in their relationships. It is a difficult and pervasive problem that is linked perhaps to some of the complex issues related to fear of failure and fear of success that plague so many students.

According to Milgram's study of academic procrastination (1993), procrastination in an academic course of study refers to a series of inefficient, avoidant behaviors (e.g., not preparing for class or for exams or doing so at

the last minute) that are moderately related to one another. Procrastinatory behaviors in one course of study are moderately related to corresponding behaviors in other courses of study undertaken at the same time. These findings suggest that academic procrastination is a domain-specific "trait" rather than a task or course specific "state" characteristic.

Second, there is also evidence both in Milgram's study (1993) and in previous research (Lay, 1987; Milgram, 1992, Solomon & Rothblum, 1984) that some students are upset by their inefficient behavior and/or its consequences, while others are not. Furthermore, even students who are low in procrastination may differ on the amount of emotional upset they experience on the few tasks on which they in fact procrastinate (Milgram, 1992). It is concluded that the relationship between procrastination and emotional upset is weak at best, with students falling into all possible combinations of high/low procrastination and high/low emotional upset about procrastination. Emotional upset about procrastination must be assessed and not merely assumed.

Third, the kind of reasons that students endorse for their academic procrastination is related to the endorsement level of these reasons. Individuals are more likely to endorse procrastination reasons that preserve their self-esteem rather than reasons that threaten it. One possible explanation for this consistent finding is that for many academic procrastinators, the reasons for procrastination function in the same way as procrastination itself: to preserve one's self-esteem. If one does not do well in his academic studies because he procrastinates, his self-esteem is less

threatened than if he gives himself ample time to prepare for his classes and exams, tries his hardest, and still fails. In other words, procrastination and the giving of reasons for it both follow the principle of preserving self-esteem.

College Procrastination v. High School Procrastination

One may challenge generalizing from the college populations on which nearly all academic procrastination research has been done to younger students in high school. One could argue that academic procrastination is far less common in high school than in college because the progress of high school students is monitored more closely by assigning and correcting homework assignments, by checking student preparedness in class orally on a regular basis, by giving exams on a frequent basis, and so on.

It is proposed that the frequency of academic procrastination in high school students is as high as, if not higher than, in college students (Milgram, 1993). This is hypothesized due to the fact that high school students are far less mature, cognitively and emotionally, than they will be several years later when they attend college. High school students in a given setting are a more heterogeneous student body than college students majoring in a particular course of study or profession. College material is more difficult, scheduling of college examinations is less amenable to student negotiation than it is in high school, and grading of college exams and written papers is more rigorous.

When comparing the frequency of academic procrastination between high school and college students, there are tradeoffs among the features that promote and those that restrict procrastination in the two age groups. One may cautiously apply knowledge derived from empirical and clinical research

on college students to high school students, until such a time as the data base on high school students has expanded sufficiently to provide researchers with understanding, prediction, and control of academic procrastination phenomena in these adolescents.

Self-handicapping and Academic Procrastination

In order to facilitate self-serving attributions and protect self-image, people may construct actual external barriers to success (Lay, 1992). This process, called self-handicapping, allows for external attributions for poor performance. Thus, self-handicappers tend to create preset barriers and attribute their failure to external (barriers) forces. Not surprisingly, procrastinators are notorious for self-handicapping, often choosing tasks that will produce the most barriers to success (Ferrari, 1991; Lay, 1992).

Self-handicapping involves the withdrawal or decrease in effort to strategically maximize one's sense of self-worth (Garcia & Pintrich, 1994). Students who engage in this particular strategy are painfully aware of the perceived link between effort and ability: that "smart" students do not have to try particularly hard to do well. Accordingly, by strategically regulating effort expenditure, self-handicapping enables the student to make self-serving attributions no matter what the task outcome. That is, by engaging reducing effort, failure may be attributed to low effort rather than to low ability or incompetence; conversely, in the event of a success, the individual may bask in attributions of exceptional ability (Garcia & Pintrich, 1994). The implication is clear--low levels of cognitive engagement may be due to attempts to maintain one's sense of self-worth, not simply because the lack of

knowledge of appropriate learning strategies. With regard to motivational factors, maintaining one's sense of self-worth may be considered a competing concern, overriding one's intrinsic value for a task, or one's efficacy, or one's anxiety about performance outcomes (Garcia & Pintrich, 1994).

Strategies such as self-handicapping are a means of preparing for possible negative outcomes. The lower levels of achievement associated with self-handicapping are by no means positive outcomes of schooling. However, the use of this and other types of strategies do exist, and the next step should be to identify the conditions under which these strategies are elicited. Furthermore, preliminary results of one study indicate that higher levels of self-handicapping are found in classrooms which are perceived to be more competitive, ability focused, and difficult and low in meaningfulness (Garcia, 1995). The emphasis on ability and the perception of a lack of emotional support lays the ground for self-handicapping. Of course, the instructor is a crucial element of the course experience. The benefits of having an organized, enthusiastic, and competent teacher might provide a motivational boost that diminishes self-handicapping (as discussed in more detail in Chapter III).

Evaluation is so paramount in students' lives that researchers have found that for many students, one's self-worth is intricately tied to one's performance. Self-handicapping is a strategy that may be used to maintain one's self-worth. This anticipatory tactic typically involves the use of procrastination: by procrastinating, one clouds the causal factors involved with performance, such that in the event of poor performance, one may

attribute the low grade to lack of effort rather than to low ability. Considering the negative impact of this strategy on students' learning and performance, identifying the factors that trigger students' self-handicapping behaviors is imperative.

Being evaluated is a fundamental aspect of schooling and the affective consequences of evaluation are powerful. Success leads to a joyous sense of competence; whereas, failure translates to a humiliating sense of inadequacy. It is because of this link between self-worth and performance that for some, effort can become a "double-edged sword" (Covington, 1992). That is, effort paired with success is a commendable combination; however, consider the alternative outcome--effort paired with failure. That particular coupling of events carries devastating implication of low ability and incompetence, and can lead to the use of self-handicapping.

By strategically creating obstacles to success, one's failure may be attributed to the obstacles; whereas, one's success may be ascribed to exceptional ability (Covington, 1992; Garcia & Pintrich, 1994). This anticipatory strategy can take on many guises, but the most common impediment used in academics is the withdrawal of effort, typically by procrastination. Self-handicapping can, accordingly, result in poor performance, but not trying and doing poorly is still considered to be the lesser of two evils (Covington, 1992). In other words, if one fears one's inadequacy, why risk confirming that inadequacy by devoting effort to the task? This unfortunate strategy may help protect one's sense of self-worth, but embodies a poor outcome for one's chances to learn and for the likelihood

of high achievement. Accordingly, identifying the personal and contextual factors that trigger students' self-handicapping behaviors is especially relevant considering the negative impact of this strategy on students' learning and performance (Covington, 1992; Garcia & Pintrich, 1994).

Finally, there is some evidence for gender and racial differences in self-handicapping. Work done with adolescents has documented that boys are more likely to self-handicap than girls (Garcia & Pintrich, 1993), and that minority students engage in higher levels of self-handicapping than do their Anglo counterparts (Covington, 1992). Due to the fact that gender and race appear to contribute to self-handicapping, it is paramount that researchers and educators alike keep these possible tendencies in mind when making future inquiries into the subject of self-handicapping.

Perfectionism and Academic Procrastination

Perfectionist students are not satisfied with merely doing well or even with doing better than their peers. They are satisfied only if they have done a job perfectly, so that the result reveals no blemishes or weaknesses. To the extent that perfectionism involves striving for difficult but reachable goals, it involves the success-seeking aspects of healthy achievement motivation and functions as an asset to the student and as an ally to the teacher. Even a success-seeking version of perfectionism, however, can become a problem to the extent that the student begins to focus not so much on meeting personal goals as on winning competitions against classmates.

Problems associated with forms of perfectionism that focus on seeking success are relatively minor, however, compared to the problems associated

with forms of perfectionism that focus on avoiding failure. Fear of failure (or of blame, rejection, or other anticipated social consequences of failure) can be destructive to achievement motivation, especially if it is powerful and persistent. Victims of such fear typically try to avoid or escape as quickly as possible from achievement situations in which their performance will be judged according to standards of excellence. When escape is not possible, they try to protect their self-esteem either by expressing very low aspirations that will be easy to fulfill or by expressing impossibly high aspirations that they have no serious intention of striving to fulfill. In the school setting, many such students become alienated underachievers.

Pacht (1984) listed the following as symptoms of student perfectionism:

1. performance standards that are impossibly high and unnecessarily rigid;
2. motivation more from fear of failure than from pursuit of success;
3. measurement of one's own worth entirely in terms of productivity and accomplishment;
4. all-or-nothing evaluations that label anything other than perfection as failure;
5. difficulty in taking credit or pleasure, even when success is achieved, because such achievement is merely what is expected;
6. procrastination in getting started on work that will be judged; and
7. long delays in completing assignments, or repeatedly starting over on assignments, because the work must be perfect from the beginning and continue to be perfect as one goes along.

Other symptoms commonly observed in perfectionist students include unwillingness to volunteer to respond to questions unless certain of the correct answer, overly emotional and "catastrophic" reactions to minor failures, and low productivity due to procrastination or excessive "start overs."

In Burka & Yuen's study (1983), participants were asked, "What is more embarrassing for you, turning in work that is mediocre, or not turning it in at all?" Most were likely to feel uncomfortable submitting mediocre work. Clearly, more is at stake for them, and as one stated, "Why bother if you're not going to do your best?"

> When something is submitted in final form to be published, it can't be mediocre. If it's work in progress, than I'll try not to be as shy about turning in something that's not so perfect.

It is interesting to note that in this study, still others find satisfaction in closure, even if the product is not reflective of their potential excellence (Burka & Yuen, 1983). One subject who does not find his work creative, stated succinctly: "But at least it's done!"

> Not turning in something that I promised is more embarrassing since it shows that I'm not being responsible or that I'm forgetful. Turning in a mediocre piece of work can also be embarrassing, but it can lead to constructive criticism and I might learn something from the experience.

> Attaining some degree of task completion is important. It may not be perfect, but it shows some movement toward completion and mastery.

A variety of psychological and physiological disorders are also associated with perfectionism. These include depression, eating disorders, obsessive-compulsive personality disorders, and suicide (Adderholt-Elliot, 1991). Perfectionism may play a role in other forms of psychopathology. For example, Adderholt-Elliot, (1991) noted several other disorders such as alcoholism, erectile dysfunction, irritable bowel syndrome, depression, anorexia, obsessive compulsive pain, dysmorphobia, and ulcerative colitis. Perfectionistic gifted students are often vulnerable to such disorders.

Negative perfectionism is further characterized by very high personal standards. According to Adderholt-Elliott (1991), gifted students are vulnerable to perfectionistic behavior, not only because of their very high standards but also because of birth order, perfectionistic parents, and pressure from teachers and peers. Adderholt-Elliott sees perfectionism as more of a problem in the gifted population, and proposed that perfectionism is an adverse reaction to stress in gifted students. She also contends that many gifted students are troubled by a condition known as developmental dysplaysia, or uneven development where the mental age of the student is greater than the chronological age. Consequently, this uneven development often becomes a source of stress because many of these students lack the necessary social and emotional skills to accomplish some tasks. Some of these gifted students will generate more stress than others and incur adverse

reactions to their stress. It is not surprising that procrastination seems to be the number one problem with this group. Several researchers cite procrastination as a problem associated with perfectionism in gifted students (Adderholt-Elliott, 1991).

The Six Styles of Academic Procrastination

Although chronic procrastinators have their own idiosyncratic ways of putting things off, they all have certain traits and experiences in common (Sapadin, 1996). Chronic procrastinators wind up sitting too long, and they do not understand why they do this time after time. Despite their good intentions, they often feel as if they cannot resist avoiding or delaying a challenging task, even when they know that the consequences can hurt them, and even after they have vowed—to themselves and to others—that they won't procrastinate again. Their apparent inability to resist procrastinating causes them to doubt themselves, which results in a lingering sense of powerlessness that all too frequently makes them feel like failures. Some direct this feeling inward and may come to regard themselves in certain respects, as worthless, stupid, unreliable, or incompetent. Others direct this feeling outward in the form of anger at the people around them (e.g., "Stop nagging me!" "What's the rush?") or resentment of the situation they are in.

Second, on the whole, chronic procrastinators are also quick to rationalize or excuse their behavior on the grounds that it is nothing they can—or should—do anything about. They often tell themselves things like, "I'm just lazy by nature," or they may make self-vindicating statements to others, like "Sorry, I'm always late in turning in assignments." It is as if

their tendency to procrastinate was just a fact of life, rather than an acquired habit capable of being broken. Often times they will forestall outside criticism by laughing about their own procrastination. They may even boast about it, as if it were a heroic, daredevil stunt: "I didn't start on this research paper until last night, and I still got it in by the deadline."

The self-justification that is so commonly practiced by chronic procrastinators is actually a form of self-deception and avoidance. Rather than taking a good look at their problem and learning how to overcome it, they choose to gloss over it, ignoring the pain it has brought them and the difficulties it has created for themselves and for others.

Third, all chronic procrastinators, at some level, experience recurring regret for not getting things done in a timely manner—a regret that eats away their capacity to enjoy life and to realize their dreams. Often, procrastinators can literally feel this regret building slowly but surely as the moment of truth draws closer—a frightening feeling that in many cases only reinforces their inertia instead of goading them to act. Thus, the student who regrets not studying for an exam the week before is likely to experience even stronger regret the night before, which can easily cause him or her to sink all the more deeply into a state of paralysis.

Rather than doing things, many chronic procrastinators tend to spend their time obsessing about what they should be doing or they may avoid the task altogether by simply pushing it out of their mind. Obsessing may feel like thinking, which makes it seem constructive, but it is actually quite different. When procrastinators obsess, their mind is like a dog chasing its

tail—they go around and around in circles, getting nowhere. Yes, they have a project that needs to be done. Yes, they want to get to it. But no, they just do not do it. Obsessively, they review the reasons why: "I don't feel like doing it now"; "It's too difficult"; "There are too many other things to do." They may also obsess about what will happen if they do not act—failure, humiliation, and loss.

Sapadin (1996) has identified six fundamental procrastination styles:

1. *The Perfectionist: ". . .but I want it to be perfect!"*

Perfectionists can be reluctant to start, or finish a task because they do not want anything less than a perfect job. Although their primary concern is not to fall short of their own lofty standards, they also worry about failing the high expectations that they believe (rightly) other people have of them. Unfortunately, once they've begun a task, they often can't resist spending far more time and energy on it than is required—a commonly unacknowledged or misunderstood form of procrastination that involves delaying the completion of a task by over-working.

2. *The Dreamer: ". . .but I hate all those bothersome details!"*

The dreamer wants life to be easy and pleasant. Difficult challenges that confront the dreamer can automatically provoke resistance: "That might be hard to do" gets translated into "I can't do it." Dreamers are very skillful in developing—and, usually, promoting—grandiose ideas, but they seem incapable of turning their sketchy ideas into full-blown realities: a pattern that frustrates

themselves as well as the people around them. Uncomfortable with the practical world, they then retreat into fantasies: "Maybe I'll get a lucky break," or "I'm a special person—I don't have to do thing the typical [i.e., hardworking] way."

3. The Worrier: ". . .but I'm afraid to change!"

Worrier procrastinators have an excessive need for security, which causes them to fear risk. They proceed too timidly through life, worrying incessantly about the "what ifs." Faced with a new situation or demand, they become especially anxious, because anything new involves change and, therefore, unknown and potentially undesirable consequences. Thus, they tend to put off making decisions, or following through on decisions, as long as they can. Once they start working on a project, they're likely to drag it out in an effort to help "soften the blow." Many times, consciously or unconsciously, they avoid finishing projects altogether, so that they never have to leave the "comfort zone" of the familiar and move on to new territory. Much to their own dismay and frustration, they resist change even when they know, intellectually, that the change is almost certain to improve their life situation.

4. The Defier: ". . .but why should I have to do it?"

The defier is a rebel, seeking to buck the rules. Some defiers are openly proud of their tendency to procrastinate, precisely because it goes against the "normal" or "logical" way to do things. By procrastinating, they are setting their own schedule—one that nobody

else can predict or control. In other words, they are establishing their individuality, against the expectations of others. Other defiers are more subtle, perhaps because they are less consciously aware of what they are doing. They don't flaunt their opposition toward doing something. They simply don't take on the responsibility to do it in a timely manner. This more subtle type of defiance is called "passive-aggressive" behavior (Sapadin, 1996). Both kinds of defier procrastinator are inclined to see relatively simple tasks—like doing the laundry, paying the bills, or maintaining a car—as impositions on their time and energy, rather than as things they should take in stride as mature adults.

5. *The Crisis-Maker: ". . .but I only get motivated at the last minute!"*

The crisis-maker needs to live on the edge. Addicted to the adrenaline rush of intense emotion, constant challenge, and emergency action, crisis-makers delight in pulling things off at the last minute. To them, procrastination is a form of adventure. Adventures, however, are by nature risky, and the crisis-maker procrastinator is often a loser. Despite the heroic, last minute run, the train is often missed. Despite working day and night all weekend, the paper often doesn't get completed by Monday.

6. *The Overdoer: ". . .but I have so much to do!"*

Overdoer procrastinators say "yes" to too much because they are unable—or unwilling to make choices and establish priorities. In other words, they haven't really mastered the art of decision-making. Due to

this liability, they tend to be inefficient in managing time, organizing resources, and resolving conflicts. The result is that they try to do too much at once and, inevitably, fail. Overdoers are often hard workers, and many of them do accomplish some things very well; however, other things never get done at all, or else get done poorly or late. With so much to do and so little time to do it in, overdoers are prime candidates for early burnout.

Each of these six procrastination styles—the perfectionist, the dreamer, the worrier, the defier, the crisis-maker, and the overdoer—involves a distinctly different pattern of impeding the productive flow of energy. However, it is rare that a chronic procrastinator displays only one of these styles. Instead, each individual employs a distinctive mix of styles: perhaps two or three styles that are the most operative—the major styles—along with two or three that are displayed less often but are still reasonably active—the minor styles.

For example, a person initially identified as a perfectionist procrastinator may also have a dreamer inside, who, among other activities, delights in imagining "perfect" life situations. As a result, sometimes the person's procrastination style is recognizably that of a perfectionist; other times, that of a dreamer. Within this same person, there may also be a bit of the crisis-maker, who performs best under pressure.

In fact, chronic procrastinators tend to harbor several—or even all—of the six procrastination styles to some degree, with different kinds of life situations triggering different kinds of styles (Sapadin, 1996). For example, a

student may identify himself as primarily a crisis-maker procrastinator, especially at school, where he has plenty of opportunities to find, or engineer, emergency situations. Nevertheless, with a little more self-analysis, he may realize that he procrastinates somewhat differently in other areas of his life.

CHAPTER II

Procrastination Quiz

The use of self-assessment quizzes can enable students to identify their personal repertoire of procrastination styles (Sapadin, 1996). Five college students were given a copy of Sapadin's Procrastination Quiz (Sapadin, 1996), and these were the results:

Student #1

Style	Total Score	Major (10 or more)	Minor (9 or less)	Rank (1=highest)
Perfectionist	8		X	2
Dreamer	12	X		1
Worrier	7		X	3
Defier	5		X	4
Crisis-Maker	4		X	5
Overdoer	8		X	2

Statistical Information

Gender: M Age: 30 Race: White Cumulative GPA: 2.7
Education Level: Sophomore Major Field of Study: Cognitive Science

Student #2

Style	Total Score	Major (10 or more)	Minor (9 or less)	Rank (1=highest)
Perfectionist	11	X		2
Dreamer	5		X	3
Worrier	2		X	5
Defier	14	X		1

Crisis-Maker	14	X		1
Overdoer	4		X	4

Statistical Information

Gender: F Age: 22 Race: Hispanic Cumulative GPA: 3.8
Education Level: Master's Student Major Field of Study: Education

Student #3

Style	Total Score	Major (10 or more)	Minor (9 or less)	Rank (1=highest)
Perfectionist	7		X	3
Dreamer	12	X		2
Worrier	7		X	4
Defier	13	X		1
Crisis-Maker	6		X	5
Overdoer	6		X	5

Statistical Information

Gender: M Age: 29 Race: White Cumulative GPA: 3.0
Education Level: Senior Major Field of Study: Geography

Student #4

Style	Total Score	Major (10 or more)	Minor (9 or less)	Rank (1=highest)
Perfectionist	14	X		1
Dreamer	2		X	5
Worrier	4		X	4
Defier	5		X	3
Crisis-Maker	4		X	4
Overdoer	10	X		2

Statistical Information

Gender: F Age: 23 Race: Hispanic Cumulative GPA: 3.8
Education Level: Master's Student Major Field of Study: Education

Student #5

Style	Total Score	Major (10 or more)	Minor (9 or less)	Rank (1=highest)
Perfectionist	16	X		1
Dreamer	16	X		1
Worrier	14	X		3
Defier	11	X		4
Crisis-Maker	15	X		2
Overdoer	9		X	5

Statistical Information

Gender: F Age: 22 Race: White Cumulative GPA: 2.0
Education Level: Freshman Major Field of Study: Health/Nutrition

Discussion of Results

The respondents represented two ethnic backgrounds (white and hispanic). Their ages ranged from 22-30. Two of the five respondents were males. The cumulative grade point averages of the respondents ranged from 2.0-3.8. There were three undergraduates and two graduate students represented. The respondents were from four different colleges (Biola University, San Diego State University, Grossmont Community College, and Mesa Community College). The respondents represented diverse majors (Education, Cognitive Science, Geography, Nutrition/Health).

Of the five college students who took the procrastination quiz, all five indicated that they suffer from academic procrastination. Student #1 was the only respondent who identified only one major style of procrastination (dreamer). Students #3 and #4 identified two major styles of procrastination each (defier/dreamer and perfectionist/overdoer). Student #2 identified three major styles of procrastination (defier/crisis-maker and perfectionist). Student #5 identified five major styles of procrastination (all except overdoer). It is interesting to note that all styles of procrastination were identified between the five respondents as a major style of procrastination.

Summary and Discussion of Student Interviews

The same five college students were also given four open-ended response questions to answer regarding academic procrastination (see Appendix). Four of the five students indicated that they would like to overcome academic procrastination in their own life. However, Student #2 was the exception. When asked if she had a desire to overcome academic procrastination in her life, Student #2 responded:

> Not really. Procrastinating works well for me—most of the time. I get good grades and seldom miss deadlines. I like knowing that I can do just as well of a job or an even better job than my peers in the shortest amount of time. When I procrastinate however, I do regret all the time I spent worrying about getting something done, instead of just doing it.

All five respondents indicated that college professors should be concerned (to some extent) about their students' procrastination habits. However, Students #4 and #5 indicated that college students should be more

responsible for their habits. Student #3 also indicated that if instructors made their courses more "relevant", "interesting", and "practical", then there would be less procrastination. Following is what Students #2, #4, and #5 had to say about college professors being concerned about their students' procrastination habits:

> I think that they should be concerned about it because most procrastinators don't really learn very much because they are often cramming large volumes of information into their short-term memory at the last minute for examinations. Written work is often poorly done or not the best that the student can do if it is done at the last minute. Procrastinators are experts at knowing the minimum they need to do to survive. They give teachers what they want, and nothing more. The challenge lies in the "art of procrastination" not in the material being learned (Student #2).
>
> Yes, although college students are adults and should somewhat be responsible for their habits at this stage in their lives, I believe that incorporating goal setting and work habit skills would benefit students tremendously. Many college students appear to be unable to organize and keep track of assignments because it has not been modeled to them (Student #4).
>
> Yes and no. I believe that once you get to college, you should be able to handle your work load, but I've noticed that just isn't the way it is. Maybe the colleges should require the students to take a class that

> teaches good study habits, giving them a clue as to what they can expect (Student #5).

In response to the question about professors actively employing methods to help motivate students who are prone to procrastinate, three of the five respondents felt that it was a great idea. "I like the idea. It's the only thing that got me working on one of my papers" (Student #5).

All five respondents varied greatly in their responses to the last question regarding the implementation of the "Procrastination Policy". Following are what two of the students had to say about deadlines:

> I function better (i.e. procrastinate less) with deadlines for papers. However if a professor was that lenient with deadlines, I would still turn them in at the end of the semester. Negative reinforcement would be more of a motivation for me than positive reinforcement (Student #2).
>
> I function better without deadlines. At mid-semester I would turn in my paper because I like to rewrite my paper somewhat after the teacher gives me feedback. Especially if the paper/assignment is a major portion of your grade. I guess it depends on how much the assignment is worth. I've had situations in the past where I misunderstood the instructor, and I wouldn't want that to happen during a major project (Student #3).

Suggestions for Students on Overcoming Academic Procrastination

Sapadin (1996) advocates three basic stages of personality-style change:

1. The "On Your Mark" Stage: from denial to awareness
2. The "Get Set" Stage: from awareness to commitment
3. The "Go!" Stage: from commitment to making it happen

The first two stages are preparation stages. The third stage is the one in which students will be most ready to change the ways they speak, think, and act.

1. The "On Your Mark" Stage: From Denial to Awareness

Denial is a pre-change or anti-change stage, in which many students do not even recognize that they have a problem. For some, the blindness is a willful effort to avoid assuming responsibility. For others, it is a true lack of realization. Either way, the student who procrastinates is more focused on what is outside than on what is inside.

When a student is in denial, he may be experiencing difficulties because of his procrastination, however often he puts the blame for the problem elsewhere. If others suggest that he has a problem, he often defensively—and reflexively—views them as the problem: they're hassling him, they don't understand, they don't know what they're talking about. The student may occasionally feel moved to change, but it is most often because of some external pressure, such as the threat of not passing a class or not graduating. To help one move through their denial, they need to become more conscious of themselves, so that they see their life situations more clearly in terms of what they do and who they are.

2. The "Get Set" Stage: From Awareness to Commitment

Once it is acknowledged that one has a problem with procrastination, they may still not be ready to change their ways. They may be getting set to change by imagining what life would be like if they did not procrastinate, by discussing self-help strategies with others, or by reading books and articles on the subject. However, they many remain ambivalent about actually committing themselves to change.

In many respects, the "Get Set" Stage is the most critical one of all. One can stay in it indefinitely, seesawing back and forth between desire-for-change and resistance-to-change. Or one can finally begin that most dramatic and valuable transition in the entire process of change: the steady progression away from ambivalence toward a serious commitment to change.

Ambivalence is characterized by indecision, frustration and mixed purposes. Although one wishes they could be rid of their problem, they are not quite ready to establish any personal goals so as to deal with it. Perhaps they assume that they can just learn to live with the problem more graciously, without having to do anything about it. One may think that sheer awareness of the problem will eventually cause it to go away on its own. One may possibly harbor the secret hope that something magical will come along to banish the problem—a new love interest, a better job, a different class, or a sudden creative breakthrough.

Another sign of ambivalence is saying, "Yes, one part of me wants to change, however another part doesn't." This kind of thinking indicates that there are several "selves" inside the individual that are having difficulty

living in peace. At times, one may feel as though an internal war is waging between one's child self ("I want to play") and one's adult self ("I want to meet my goals"). Or perhaps one's insecure self ("I can't do it") is battling with one's competent self ("Oh, yes I can!"). Or maybe the fight is between one's lazy self ("I'm a couch potato") and one's energetic self ("I'm rarin' to go!").

The chronic procrastinator should pay close attention to these dueling dialogues and, instead of letting them run their destructive course, turn them into peaceful negotiations. Each "self" deserves attention. One needs time to play and to work, to acknowledge insecurities and to give pep talks, to be lazy and to be dynamic. When one can allow all of these parts to have appropriate space in one's life, according to one's best, conscious judgement, one will learn to co-exist in a more balanced and comfortable manner. As a result, they will no longer feel so paralyzed by ambivalence. One can then move with more freedom toward making the changes that will help them overcome their procrastination pattern.

Regret is yet another issue that keeps many people stuck in indecision and resistant to change. Regret can by useful if it teaches a lesson that can apply to the future. However, regret can be harmful if one wastes time and energy bemoaning the past instead of living in the present. Regretting is easy. Changing is more difficult. In the fantasy world of regret, doing something differently is a breeze. However in real life, it can be terrifying. Whenever one regrets something that happened—or did not happen because of procrastination, they are mourning a loss: a better possibility that did not become realized. If one sincerely wants a similar possibility to come true in

the future, their only recourse is to let go of the regret and start working toward that possibility now. One should let regrets be self-educational. The past should be learned from, not just regretted. Regret should be used to inspire change. Future regrets should also be anticipated before making decisions.

3. The "Go!" Stage: From Commitment to Making it Happen

The "Go!" Stage is the crucial one in which one actually conquers their procrastination habit. Here, it is appreciated that the time for change is now. It is realized that one needs to make positive changes in three areas: thinking, speaking, and acting. One should be eager to move forward, even though one knows it will be a struggle.

- *Thinking positively*. It all begins with the mind. Altering one's attitude is making a giant step towards change. One's mind can make almost anything happen if one focuses on the possibilities, letting the objections take a back seat. Think positively, and one will be able to speak and act courageously.
- *Speaking positively*. The language one uses in self-talk or speaking to others also makes a profound difference in how one views oneself, one's life, and the specific tasks that lay ahead. It is important to bear in mind that words do not just describe situations, they help to determine situations. By giving expression to one's thoughts, one is taking a stand, making oneself more like to accomplish what they have set out to do.
- *Acting positively*. When energy is obstructed, tasks, even simple ones, can seem heavy and burdensome. However, when one flows freely, the very

same tasks that seemed so burdensome can be stimulating, and even fun. As one progresses into change, one is bound to experience occasional seductions or relapses into one's old, self-defeating habits of procrastination. However, the key to remaining in the change process is learning to regard any setbacks as temporary and inconclusive. One should not waste time feeling guilty about setbacks, but should instead revitalize their commitment to change.

Motivating Oneself to Stay on Track

It should be obvious at this point that changing one's procrastinating ways is necessary, or at least desirable. One may also be very clear about what is needed to change, and what the process of change entails; however, how does one actually make oneself change? Forcing oneself to change by self-imposed orders, threats, and punishments is not the answer. The key to a lasting transformation lies in motivating oneself to want to change.

Sapadin (1996) offers the following suggestions to inspire procrastinators to continue on the path of change, no matter how discouraged they may get: (1) identify, and repeatedly remind yourself of the reasons why it is good for you to change; (2) play a game with yourself called "Avoiding Avoiding"; (3) make the most any criticism you get; and (4) reward yourself for progress.

CHAPTER III

Summary and Discussion of Professor's Interview

A college professor was interviewed about her opinions regarding academic procrastination. The professor was given five open-ended response questions to answer (see Appendix). The first question asked if academic procrastination among the professor's students was a concern, and following is her response:

> From an academic perspective at the graduate level, procrastination is not of high concern to me in that oftentimes a longer gestation period leads to a more thoughtful response to an assignment. However, the stress that accompanies procrastination can, for some individuals, become dehabilitating.

The professor's response is noteworthy in that she believes that, "oftentimes a longer gestation period leads to a more thoughtful response". It would be interesting to determine how much time--if any students spend thinking about and planning their response to a given assignment while they are procrastinating. The second question asked if the professor employed any techniques to determine which or how many of her students suffer from academic procrastination:

> No—however, due dates monitor this area for those who procrastinate to the point of being unable to deliver the product (assignment) on time and in quality condition. I haven't found academic procrastination to be of high concern at the graduate level. However, it clearly exists

> because for Ph.D. candidates, about 50% that finish all coursework never complete their dissertation.

In response to both questions, the professor indicates that she has not found academic procrastination to be of high concern at the graduate level, yet she is aware that for some students the stress that accompanies procrastination can be dehabilitating. As long as deadlines are met, the professor does not indicate that she is aware or concerned about the thought process or length of time her students spend on a given assignment. It is possible for chronic procrastinators to deliver an assignment, "on time and in quality condition" without having learned anything at all, or without having done the presumed work that may be "required" for the completion of the assignment (i.e. reading, studying, or in-depth research).

The professor indicated that she does not currently employ any methods to help motivate students who tend to procrastinate; yet, she would be willing to do so if it helped her students. When asked if she believed the "Procrastination Policy" would motivate students who tend to procrastinate, the professor responded:

> Yes, for students who are self-motivated, lifelong learners in higher education—I *think* they would go for bullet #2 [papers turned in before mid-semester will be critiqued, given tentative grades, returned promptly, and are eligible for free rewrites without prejudice] and ask for critiques.

The problem with this optimistic response, is that chronic procrastinators are seldom self-motivated, and as the student surveys indicated, most of the students interviewed stated that they would still procrastinate and turn in assignments at the end of the semester regardless if they would be able to receive critiques and rewrite their papers.

Evaluating Teacher Implemented Methods of Motivation

It appears that the most successful way to motivate chronic procrastinators and to encourage optimum learning is for educators to continue to use deadlines and other methods of external motivation. Procrastinators would benefit further from their classes if there was more structure and accountability. Procrastinators who want to succeed would be forced to apply themselves in a timely manner if there were pop-quizzes on reading assignments. They would have a greater incentive to keep up with the reading and learn the material over the course of the semester, instead of cramming the last few days before the final exam.

Due to the fact that procrastinators wait until the last minute to complete written assignments, educators would be providing a great service to their students and would help to alleviate some of their stress by implementing "mini-deadlines" to keep students accountable for completing certain portions of a large written assignment. It is critical, however, that these "mini-deadlines" be non-negotiable and worth a significant percentage of the student's grade in order to be an effective motivator.

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation

Procrastination may be a result of lack of motivation toward the task at hand, instead of an enduring personality characteristic. Therefore, what motivates students to perform and accomplish academic work in the first place is paramount to understanding whether they will procrastinate, why they will do so, and the types of reasons they will use to justify their procrastinatory behavior. Motivation is the force that drives a person to engage in activities. There are two types of motivation: intrinsic motivation, which refers to the motivation that results from internal drive toward an activity (Amabile & Gitomer, 1984), and extrinsic motivation, which describes the type of motivation that results as a function of the external contingencies to perform a specific task. Intrinsic motivation may be undermined by conditions in the educational and work environment (Amabile, 1983). Because rewards are one of the most prominent influences on intrinsic motivation (Amabile, 1983), motivation toward academic work may be unstable because of the dependence on external rewards for work.

Senecal's 1995 study indicated that students who had intrinsic reasons for pursuing their studies were likely to procrastinate less; whereas, those who had extrinsic reasons were likely to procrastinate more. Also, students who were not motivated or helpless in the regulation of their academic behavior were likely to procrastinate more. Thus, less autonomous forms of motivation are associated with higher levels of procrastination.

Perhaps the only way to guarantee low levels of procrastination is with intrinsic motivation. No matter how important students consider their

courses to be for achieving their future life goals, they are still likely to procrastinate if they are not *genuinely* interested in the course material. Thus, procrastination appears to be a motivational problem that requires that a very high threshold of autonomy be reached before it can be overcome. This finding may explain why procrastination continues to be so remarkably widespread in the academic domain.

The Use of Tests to Enhance Incentive Motivation

As one proceeds through school, the responsibility for control of one's own performance shifts progressively from parents and teachers to oneself, reaching a high point during the college years (Tuckman, 1996). The inability to overcome procrastination tendencies may be related to problems encountered by many college students, leading some to be on the lookout for effective strategies that may be used to help students regulate their own learning. One such strategy, the use of tests to enhance incentive motivation as an inducement to overcome procrastination in regard to studying on a timely basis was investigated in Tuckman's study (1996).

Behavior that is motivated or prompted by the desire to attain or avoid an incentive can be said to be the result of incentive motivation. For example, in anticipation of a situation in which a person is required to perform, that person may expend considerable effort in preparation because of the mediation provided by the desire to achieve success or avoid failure. That desire would be said to provide incentive motivation for the person to expend the effort, particularly for a person who, in the absence of an incentive, has a tendency to procrastinate. Accordingly, a test, as a stimulus

situation, may be theorized to provoke students to study as a response, because of the mediation of the desire to achieve success or avoid failure on that test. Studying for the test, therefore, as opposed to procrastinating, would be the result of incentive motivation.

Since procrastination is regarded as a motivational problem, it is not unreasonable that its potential solution lies in the area of motivation. Procrastinators are difficult to motivate and, therefore, typically put off beginning a task. Procrastinators are likely to put off school assignments and studying until the last possible moment. They may study for exams, but cannot necessarily be counted on to keep up with assigned reading. As a result, their study burden immediately proceeding an exam that covers a number of chapters of assigned reading can be overwhelming.

Pop-quizzes, as an instructional intervention, were found to provide a continuing basis for student motivation over an entire course in Tuckman's 1996 study. They induced students to study on a daily or weekly basis, rather than postponing it until the middle or end of the course. For those students who have a marked tendency to procrastinate, incentive motivation would appear to provide the needed inducement to self-regulate learning. Regular testing of assigned material appears to be a necessary stimulus for causing serious and timely studying by those students who, when on their own, have a marked tendency to procrastinate.

"No Deadlines" Procrastination Policy

The traditional means of dealing with procrastination has been to impose deadlines on papers and projects in an attempt to balance out

students' time on task throughout the semester. However, according to Connors (1995), deadlines serve to create more opportunities for procrastination and do little to address the underlying issue of students' taking responsibility for their own learning. Connors (1995) advocates an alternate approach for handling student procrastination. He announced a policy of "No Deadlines" in his upper division courses. Students could turn in their work at any time up to the final exam date without penalty, and they could even negotiate an incomplete grade with little hassle. As an incentive to increase time on task early in the semester, any paper submitted prior to mid-semester would receive prompt and elaborate feedback from the professor with an option for as much revision and rewriting as needed without prejudice. Papers received after mid-semester but before the next-to-last week of the semester, although not eligible for rewrites, would get prompt and ample feedback along with suggestions for improving future efforts. However, papers received at the end of the semester would receive only a grade—no critiques, comments, or suggestions.

Connors (1995) indicated that his policy has met with modest success thus far. Informal student comments were positive, although many students admitted that they had not always maximized their opportunities for completing work early in the semester. Approximately half of the students took advantage of the free rewrite option on at least one paper. Approximately ten percent managed to turn in everything by mid-semester, but those tended to be the students whose work did not need much additional attention. A few "diehard procrastinators" dumped a pile of papers on

Connors' desk when they showed up, bleary-eyed for the final exam. It is interesting to note that a small minority of students almost begged for deadlines.

A bonus of Connors' "Procrastination Policy" has been in the professor's own time management throughout the semester. Student papers tend to come in a few at a time, reducing turnaround time. At the end of the semester, grading papers without comments is a huge timesaver. Nonetheless, Connors confesses that, "the old procrastinator in me still manages to be one of the last in line to turn in grades at the registrar's office."

Coping with Perfectionist Students

Perfectionist students need to relearn performance norms and work expectations. They need to learn that (1) schools are places to learn knowledge and skills, not merely to demonstrate them; (2) errors are normal, expected, and often necessary aspects of the learning process; (3) everyone makes mistakes, including the professor; (4) there is no reason to devalue oneself or fear rejection or punishment just because one has made a mistake; and (5) it is usually more helpful to measure progress by comparing where one is now with where one was, rather than by comparing oneself with peers or with ideals of perfection.

Helping perfectionists develop more realistic expectations is a process that needs to be couched within a context of acceptance of their motivation to achieve and their need to feel satisfied with their accomplishments. Thus, instead of dismissing their concerns as unfounded (and expecting them to

accept this view), educators can use active listening methods to encourage these students to express their concerns, make it clear that they take those concerns seriously, and engage in collaborative planning with the students concerning steps that might alleviate the problem. The goal is to help perfectionist students achieve a 20 or 30 degree change, rather than a 180 degree turnaround (Pacht, 1984).

Educators want students to retain their desire to aim high and put forth their best efforts, but to learn to do so in ways that are realistic and productive rather than rigid and compulsive. Intervention efforts are likely to feature some form of cognitive restructuring. McIntyre (1989) suggested the following teacher strategies for working with perfectionists: "give permission" to make mistakes, or divide assignments into outline, rough draft, and final draft stages, with perfection promoted only for the final draft; discuss appropriate reactions to making mistakes; and frequently use ungraded assignments or assignments that call for creative, individual responses rather than correct answers. If necessary, place limits on perfectionist procrastination by limiting the time that can be spent on an assignment or by limiting the amount of correcting allowed.

Educators must by careful to be sure that the assistance they provide does not make these students too dependent on them, to the point that they seek teacher clarification and approval of every step of their work. The goal is to gradually guide the student toward an independent work posture.

Brophy and Rohrkemper (1989) found that effective teachers made an attempt to appeal to, persuade, or change the attitudes of perfectionist students, and to support their efforts to change, by doing the following:

1. building a friendly, supportive learning environment;
2. establishing the expectation that mistakes are a normal part of the learning process;
3. presenting themselves as helpful instructors concerned primarily with promoting student learning, rather than as authority figures concerned primarily with evaluating student performance;
4. articulating expectations that stress learning and improvement over perfect performance on assignments;
5. explaining how perfectionism is counterproductive;
6. reassuring perfectionist students that they will get the help they need to achieve success, following through with help, and communicating teacher approval of students' progress and accomplishments.

Effective educators identified the most ineffective strategies for dealing with perfectionist students as criticizing or nagging, threatening punishment for failure to change, controlling or suppressing perfectionist tendencies, and ignoring or denying the problem rather than dealing with it (Brophy, 1995).

In conclusion, effective educators take perfectionist students who procrastinate seriously, communicating understanding and approval of their desire to do well and sympathizing with the students' feelings of embarrassment and frustration. Educators can learn to support and

reinforce the success-seeking aspects of achievement motivation while working to reduce unrealistic goal setting and unnecessary procrastination.

Conclusions and Implications for Pedagogical Practice

Several practical implications for evaluation and intervention with students who exhibit procrastination problems follow. Some are self-evident, others less so.

First, one must assess the extent of academic procrastination, both its intensity and its breath. If academic procrastination is confined to one particular course of study, then one identifies situation-specific or "state" features of the course in question and how they are perceived by the student as a basis for effective intervention. If it affects many, if not all, courses of study, then one looks for "trait," or more generalized, features and their explanations.

Second, one must identify the extent of emotional upset associated with procrastinatory behavior and/or its consequences. People may be upset for different reasons. Students low in procrastination become upset about their infrequent lapses from proper academic habits. Students high in procrastination may become upset only when they have to suffer the consequences of inefficient behavior.

Third, as suggested by Milgram (1991) in an analysis of procrastination, it may be helpful to identify in a given procrastinating student whether internal avoidant tendencies or external aversive stimuli, or both, are implicated in the presenting problem; and whether the student is likely to be motivated to act to avoid the possibility of success, to avoid the

possibility of failure, or to guarantee partial or complete failure. When the particular profile of external and internal factors and motivational direction are considered, one is better able to understand and treat academic procrastination by: (1) developing primary intervention workshops for all students, (2) developing secondary interventions for students at risk, and (3) providing counseling and specific tertiary treatment for students with damaging procrastination habits.

Recommendations for Future Research

In future studies of academic procrastination, researchers should examine individual differences in motivation for purposeful delay of tasks. Such studies may lead to strategies that would facilitate instructional techniques and personal counseling to promote student learning, development, and growth. Moreover, additional inquiries should be made into any positive results of procrastination.

References

Adderholt-Elliot, M. (1991). Perfectionism and the Gifted Adolescent. New York: Teachers College Press.

Bandura, A. (1986). Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social-Cognitive Theory. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Brophy, J. (1996). Working with Perfectionist Students. (ERIC Digest No. PS024741). Urbana, IL: ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 400 124)

Burka, J. B., & Yuen, L. M. (1983). Procrastination: Why You Do It, What To Do About It. Reading, PA: Addison-Wesley.

Conners, K. J. (1995). Do It Now! College Teaching, 43, 16-17.

Ellis, A. & Knaus, W. J. (1977). Overcoming procrastination. New York: New American Library.

Ferrari, J. R. (1991). Self-handicapping by Procrastinators: Protecting Self-esteem, Social-Esteem, or Both? Journal of Research in Personality, 25, 245-161.

Ferrari, J. R. (1992). Psychometric Validation of Two Procrastination Inventories for Adults: Arousal and Avoidance Measures. Journal of Psychopathology and Behavioral Assessment, 14, 97-100.

Ferrari, J. R. (1995). Ego-Identity and Academic Procrastination among University Students. Journal of College Student Development, 36, 361-367.

Gallagher, R. P., & Others. (1992). The Personal , Career, and Learning Skills Needs of College Students. Journal of College Student Development, 33, 301-310.

Garcia, T., & Others. (1995). Worriers and Procrastinators: Differences in Motivation, Cognitive Engagement, and Achievement between Defensive Pessimists and Self-Handicappers. (Report No. TMO23325). San Francisco, CA: Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association. (ERIC Documentation Reproduction Service No. ED 383 771)

Garcia, T., & Others. (1996). Predictors of Self-Handicapping: An Examination of Personal and Contextual Factors. (Report No. TMO25249). New York, NY: Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 397 115)

Lay, C. H. (1992). Self-Handicappers and Procrastinators: A Comparison of Their Practice Behavior Prior to an Evaluation. Journal of Research in Personality, 26, 242-257.

McCown, W., & Johnson, J. (1991). Personality and Chronic Procrastination by University Students During an Academic Exam Period. Personality and Individual Differences, 12, 413-415.

Milgram, N. A., & Others. (1993). Correlates of Academic Procrastination. Journal of School Psychology, 31, 487-500.

Pacht, A. (1984). Reflections on Perfection. American Psychologist, 39, 386-390.

Rothblum, E. D., Solomon, L. J., & Murakami, J. (1986). Affective, Cognitive, and Behavioral Differences Between High and Low Procrastinators. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 33, 387-394.

Sapadin, Linda, (1996). It's About Time: The Six Styles of Procrastination and How to Overcome Them. New York, NY: Penguin.

Senecal, C., & Others. (1995). Self-Regulation and Academic Procrastination. Journal of Social Psychology, 135, 607-619.

Solomon, L. J., & Rothblum, E. D. (1984). Academic Procrastination: Frequency and Cognitive-Behavioral Correlates. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 31, 503-509.

Subotnik, R. F., & Others. (1997). Procrastination Revisited: The Constructive Use of Delayed Response. (Report No. HE030074). Chicago, IL: Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 406 901)

Tuckman, B. W. (1996). Using Spotquizzes as an Incentive to Motivate Procrastinators to Study. (Report No. HEO29158). New York, NY: Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 394 462)

Van Tassal-Baska, J. (1989). The Role of the Family in the Success of Disadvantaged Gifted Learners. Journal for the Education of the Gifted, 13 (1), 22-36.

Appendix

Student Interview Questions

1. Do you have any desire to overcome academic procrastination in your own life? Please elaborate.

2. Do you think college professors should be concerned about their students' procrastination habits? Please elaborate.

3. What do you think about professors actively employing methods (such as pop-quizzes on reading assignments and implementing mini-deadlines for research papers) to help motivate students who are prone to procrastinate?

4. Do you think you function better with or without deadlines for papers? If the following "Procrastination Policy" was implemented in one of your classes, when do you think you would turn in your papers?

- No deadlines; students may turn in work any time up to the final exam date.
- Papers turned in before mid-semester will be critiqued, given tentative grades, returned promptly, and are eligible for free rewrites without prejudice.
- Papers turned in before the next-to-last week of the semester will be critiqued, graded, and returned promptly.
- Papers turned in at semester's end will be graded only.

Statistical Information

Gender:_____ Age:_____ Race:_____ Cumulative GPA: _____

Education Level (check one):

Freshman_____, Sophomore_____, Junior_____, Senior _____,
Master's Student_____, Doctoral Student_____, Post-Doctoral_____

Major Field of Study: _____

Students' Interview Transcripts

Student #1

1. Sure, on one level I would love to be punctual and have the energy and excitement to tackle assignments. On the other hand, the focus required to bare in mind the various tasks in a schedule is an impediment to creativity. This is not intended as a general statement about thinking, just a comment on my poor memory and its costs. There is hope. I suppose I may just need a vitalizing inspiration.

2. "Should" takes the perspective of justice which would cripple my response if however I may alter the question to ask if it would have "constructive purpose" the answer I will give will be closer to that desired. Answering the altered question, sure it is always better to look in and try to adjust the input of a "function box" rather than ignoring what is inside assuming the teacher's goal is to end-up with students who have acquired the requisite and suggested information and can employ presented concepts skillfully.

3. I think more science must be done to be sure these methods are resulting in their intended aims. It may not be fruitful to punish those with other learning styles. I haps there are those who make better sense of information acquired all at once and others as grazers. I propose that what is really desired by the instructor is complete, well thought-out assignments turned in on time. The concern is that there may be a better solution though only imagination and experimentation can identify these options. One technique I have seen is instructors allowing students to do work in the classroom. Unfortunately, it is usually as a punishment for the whole class

for not doing the required preparation. I think if you get procrastinators going, that is 80% of the battle.

4. I suspect I would turn one paper in early and most of the rest near or at the deadline. Even though some would only be near the deadline I would not have time to correct them because of the others that I would not even have started. I also suspect teachers would be more critical of work which they think you can rewrite and as a result those which were turned in near the deadline would get crucified and I would have to live with those grades. Grades in other subjects may suffer also.

Student #2

1. Not really. Procrastinating works well for me—most of the time. I get good grades and seldom miss deadlines. I like knowing that I can do just as well of a job or an even better job than my peers in the shortest amount of time. When I procrastinate, however, I do regret all the time I spent worrying about getting something done, instead of just doing it.

2. I think that they should be concerned about it because most procrastinators don't really learn very much because they are often cramming large volumes of information into their short-term memory at the last minute for examinations. Written work is often poorly done or not the best that the student can do if it is done at the last minute. Procrastinators are experts at knowing the minimum they need to do to survive. They give teachers what they want, and nothing more. The challenge lies in the "art of procrastination" not in the material being learned.

3. As a procrastinator, this would definitely motivate me to read

assignments and meet deadlines on time.

4. I function better (i.e. procrastinate less) with deadlines for papers. However, if a professor was that lenient with deadlines, I would still turn them in at the end of the semester. Negative reinforcement would be more of a motivation for me than positive reinforcement.

Student #3

1. Yes, I do. I feel it can be very dangerous to continually put things off. My problem is that I often feel assignments are irrelevant or trivial and put them off. This excuse can be used as a form of procrastinating. It's hard to make yourself do something that you truly loathe.

2. Yes. They should make assignments more relevant and interesting for students. Not enough effort is put in by instructors to improve the courses they teach. Busy work is another big one. If instructors made their courses more practical, there would be less procrastination.

3. I don't think it will be truly effective for most procrastinators. Good students can see past mini-deadlines and know what stage of an assignment is truly important. Procrastinators know how to get around such devices.

4. I function better without deadlines. At mid-semester I would turn in my paper because I like to rewrite my paper somewhat after the teacher gives me feedback. Especially if the paper/assignment is a major portion of your grade. I guess it depends on how much the assignment is worth. I've had situations in the past where I misunderstood the instructor, and I wouldn't want that to happen during a major project.

Student #4

1. I desire to be easier on myself as I am a perfectionist procrastinator. I want to be less rigid and be able to delegate to others.

2. Yes, although college students are adults and should somewhat be responsible for their habits at this stage in their lives, I believe that incorporating goal setting and work habit skills would benefit students tremendously. Many college students appear to be unable to organize and keep track of assignments because it has not been modeled to them.

3. I think this is a great idea to ensure that all students succeed or have a chance to succeed. Perhaps, eventually, procrastinators will learn from this because it has been modeled to them. I don't think such habits are modeled enough at any level of education.

4. I would turn my papers in in enough time for them to be critiqued and for me to do the rewrites suggested. I believe I would do this because I already keep myself on an academic schedule. Also, I know I would learn the most from the various drafts and/or rewrites.

Student #5

1. Yes! I want to graduate and move on into a career, but there's always a reason I don't put my nose to the grindstone. I think I'm scared of hard work and sacrifice so I allow/create situations that keep me from my goals.

2. Yes and no. I believe that once you get to college, you should be able to handle your work load, but I've noticed that just isn't the way it is. Maybe the colleges should require the students to take a class that teaches good study habits, giving them a clue as to what they can expect.

3. I like the idea. It's the only thing that got me working on one of my papers.

4. It sounds good if students aren't horrible procrastinators.

Professor Interview Questions

1. Does the practice of academic procrastination among your students concern you? Why or why not? Please elaborate.

2. Do you employ any techniques to determine which or how many of your students suffer from academic procrastination? Explain.

3a. Do you employ any methods (such as pop-quizzes on reading assignments or the implementation of mini-deadlines for research papers) to help motivate students who are prone to procrastination? Please elaborate.

3b. If you do use any methods to deter procrastination, how effective or ineffective do you perceive them to be? How do you determine this?

4a. Do you think students perform better with or without deadlines for papers? Elaborate.

4b. If the following "Procrastination Policy" was implemented in your classes, do you think it would motivate students who tend to procrastinate? Why or why not?

- No deadlines; students may turn in work any time up to the final exam date.
- Papers turned in before mid-semester will be critiqued, given tentative grades, returned promptly, and are eligible for free rewrites without prejudice.
- Papers turned in before the next-to-last week of the semester will be critiqued, graded, and returned promptly.
- Papers turned in at semester's end will be graded only.

5. Would you be willing to change your syllabus and implement new methods to help motivate your students to avoid procrastination? Why or why not?

Statistical Information

1. What department do you teach in? _____

2. How many years have you been teaching at the college level? _____

3. Did/do you consider yourself to be an academic procrastinator as a student?

4. Do you consider yourself to be a procrastinator as an educator? If so, in what way?

Professor's Interview Transcript

1. From an academic perspective at the graduate level, procrastination is not of high concern to me in that oftentimes a longer gestation period leads to a more thoughtful response to an assignment. However, the stress that accompanies procrastination can, for some individuals, become dehabilitating.

2. No—however, due dates monitor this area for those who procrastinate to the point of being unable to deliver the product (assignment) on time and in quality condition. I haven't found academic procrastination to be of high concern at the graduate level. However, it clearly exists because for Ph.D. candidates, about 50% that finish all coursework never complete their dissertation.

3a. No, but I'm going to start this on the Capstone process. We're starting classes next semester to help give social/academic support to the Capstone thesis. This was suggested by both faculty and students.

3b. N/A

4a. Deadlines are a necessary evil where time measures and oftentimes rules our daily pilgrimage. Personally, I like to wait to the last minute to complete a project. I have more adrenaline at the end.

4b. Yes, for students who are self-motivated, lifelong learners in higher education. I think they would go for bullet #2 and ask for critiques.

5. If it helped my students.

Statistical Information

1. What department do you teach in? Education, Graduate

2. How many years have you been teaching at the college level? 4

3. Did/do you consider yourself to be an academic procrastinator as a student? I always (almost) met deadlines but often waited until the last minute.

4. Do you consider yourself to be a procrastinator as an educator? If so, in what way? Yes—deadlines motivate me.